

CABTRAC 2026 NCI Training Branch Town Hall Pre-submitted Questions
What new domains of knowledge and skills are needed to be integrated into competency based education for CAB trainees to prepare the next generation of cancer researchers
Dr. Zahir thank you for this opportunity to provide questions directly to the NCI. As a cancer biology trainee, I want to know why more efforts have not been made to interrogate how to make research for cancer therapeutics more translational. The pharmaceutical industry has long used guinea pigs to confirm and validate the pharmacodynamics and pharmacokinetics of burgeoning infectious and immunological drug therapies. I recently consulted a campus veterinarian about this very topic. She mentioned that more basic research is needed to derive antibodies that work in guinea pigs. Simply, since antibodies mainly have been developed to work in mice and rats, the animal models of disease are restricted to those models. Cancer patients want answers yesterday. Why is NCI not addressing this need now to develop better translational models that can finally bridge this translational gap and save the livelihood of more patients? Otherwise, we simply are working to solve cancer development in mice and rats, not human patients.
1. What changes do we anticipate to the NOFO in regards to CRTEC? 2. With getting training grants like T32s becoming harder and NIH budgets tightening, what changes are being made to how CRTEC is evaluated for the CCSG? 3. Do we anticipate more focus on workforce development for CRTEC?
Is the NCI YES program going to allow for funding of undergraduate research?
Can you tell us about the F99/K00 mechanism? Has it been discontinued and if so, will it be resumed in the near future? If not, what training opportunities do you recommend for PhD students (aside from F31)?
When will the F99/K00 NOFO be reissued? Dr. Letai said the RFA was delayed; what exactly does this mean? For those of us who missed this opportunity, what other NCI opportunities do you recommend for early stage postdocs?
CABTRAC 2026 NCI Training Branch Town Hall Live Questions (from Chat)
Hi Dr. Zahir, I'm a second-year PharmD student at the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy. As a PharmD student interested in oncology drug development rather than a traditional academic PI track, are there NCI training opportunities that you would particularly recommend? Thank YOU
Did I see correctly that K08 might not allow clinical trials any longer? If so, how will clinical investigators get support for their first trials, and that training, or will there be a different mechanism made available, with a CT option?
Do the outcomes of training grants need to be academic independence?
Is U.S. citizenship or permanent residency required for a K99 award too?
<i>RESPONSE: There is no citizenship requirement for K99 applicants. An applicant may be a citizen or a non-citizen national of the United States, have been lawfully admitted for permanent residence (i.e., possess a currently valid Permanent Resident Card USCIS Form I-551, or other legal verification of such status), or be a non-U.S. citizen. For applications submitted on behalf of non-U.S. citizens with temporary U.S. visas, visa status during each phase of the K99/R00 award must allow the PD/PI to conduct the proposed research at the applicant institution. For the K99 phase of the award, the applicant institution is responsible for determining and documenting, in the K99 application, that the candidate's visa will allow him or her to remain in the U.S. long enough to complete the K99 phase of the award. For the R00 phase of the award, the U.S institution at which the R00 phase of the award will be conducted is responsible for determining and documenting, in the R00 application, that the PD/PI's visa will allow the PD/P</i>
How is NCI thinking about the future of institutional training grants in the AI era? Are there plans to encourage or prioritize T32 programs that integrate cancer biology, clinical research, and AI/data science training?
I am an F99/K00 awardee currently in an instructor position, having completed my postdoctoral training at Stanford University. It has been approximately six years since I earned my Ph.D. Due to a combination of medical circumstances and family commitments, I was unable to apply for a K99/R00 award within the eligibility window. As I explore funding opportunities for the next stage of my career, I have found it challenging to identify awards and grants that are available to senior postdoctoral researchers or instructors who have not yet transitioned to an independent assistant professor position. Many career development awards appear to require either early eligibility after the Ph.D. or an established independent faculty appointment. Could you recommend any funding mechanisms, career development awards, or grant opportunities that support advanced postdoctoral researchers or instructors who are preparing for independence but have not yet secured an assistant professor position?
<i>RESPONSE: K01 is intended for early career investigators from postdocs to assistant professors. NCI does not have limit on the number of postdegree years or lengths of postdoctoral training</i>
Could you provide some insights on whether K01s are as competitive as K99?
Do the outcomes of training grants need to be academic independence?